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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

1. Summary: Most Chinese-language Taipei dailies focused their coverage August 8 on local issues such as the water shortage in Taoyuan County, a junior high school student overpowering an armed bank robber, and a child abuse case. The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" was the only Chinese-language newspaper that spent its front page (as well as one third of its page three) reporting on Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's decision to dissolve the lower house of Japan's parliament and call for elections after the upper house rejected a bill to privatize the country's postal service. With regard to Taiwan's relationship with the United States, the pro-independence "Liberty Times," Taiwan's biggest daily, carried a news story on its page three that was topped with the headline: "[TSU Legislator] Lo Chih-ming: The United States may likely agree to allow President Chen Shui-bian to visit [the United States]." The sub-headline added: "Based on Lo's information, Bian may even be able to deliver a public speech in the United States. Lo meets with Japanese officials and hopes Tokyo would follow suit."

2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, several newspapers editorialized on cross-Straits relations August 5 - 9. An editorial in the pro-unification "United Daily News" August 9 suggested that Taiwan seek support from the people on the mainland when dealing with cross-Straits relations. Former Taiwan National Security Council Deputy Secretary-General Antonio Chiang commented on the recently held U.S.-China strategic dialogue in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily," saying the dialogue indicates that the bilateral ties between the two countries will face new adjustments. A separate August 5 "United Daily News" editorial urged the Taiwan government to implement a more proactive cross-Straits policy by liberalizing the three direct links as soon as possible. An editorial in the limited-circulation, conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" predicted that recent geopolitical changes among the United States, China, Japan and Russia are likely to complicate the already volatile relations across the Taiwan Strait. End summary.

A) "The 1.3 Billion Mainland Chinese: the Variable with the Highest Potential in Developing Cross-Straits Relations"

The pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 500,000] said in an editorial (8/9):

"In short, in addition to the conditions that Taiwan can control by itself, the two external factors regarding cross-Straits relations, on which Taiwan must work, are the United States and China. The U.S. cross-Straits policy is to realize the U.S. interest. For Taiwan, the 'development elasticity' in relation to this factor has already reached its utmost limit. As for the Chinese factor, one certainly can divide it into two concepts: the 'Chinese authority' and the 'mainland people.' The 'development elasticity' of the 'Chinese authority' is smaller while that of the 'mainland people' is much larger. This means if Taiwan can influence the 'mainland people' and enable a public atmosphere, in which the people of both sides across the Strait will encourage and appreciate each other. This is not only a 'desirable' but also a 'feasible' goal for Taiwan's cross-Straits strategy. .

"When Taiwan's leaders in charge of political affairs are turning the island into a 'Taiwan independence fortress,' the 'mainland people' will be forced to back the 'Chinese authority' on the nationalist 'united front.' In contrast, if the Taiwan authority can position Taiwan as a 'beacon of democracy,' we may be able to separate the 'Chinese authority' from the 'mainland people' and build a consensus or tacit agreement of mutual-encouragement and mutual appreciation between the peoples of Taiwan and the mainland. Whether we want to make the 1.3 billion people hostile to the 'Taiwan independence fortress' or cherish the 'beacon of democracy' should be a strategic

choice that Taiwan must make on cross-Strait relations in the future. ."

B) "Behind the [Strategic] Dialogue in Beijing"

Former Taiwan National Security Council Deputy Secretary-General Antonio Chiang commented in the mass-

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circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 570,000] (8/5):

"[Former] U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell once said two years ago that the relations between the United States and China had never been better. Sadly, the honeymoon period [between the two countries] did not last very long, and dramatic changes have happened to their bilateral relations over the past year. Even though Washington and Beijing have worked with each other over a number of issues, they have suspicions about each other's motives. Two days ago, both the United States and China had a strategic dialogue in Beijing, and this move indicated that their bilateral ties would face new adjustments. .

"Washington suspects that China's economic policy toward other countries is a political and a plunderer-like one. [For Washington,] China's plan to purchase a U.S. oil company is not a business behavior but an economic strategic approach. Washington also questioned China's blueprint for Asia, believing that China's aim is to replace the United States' position, and the purpose of China's military modernization has all the more manifested Beijing's strategic ambition.

"Beijing, on the other hand, criticized Washington for containing it diplomatically and suppress it economically. [Beijing said Washington] launched the China threat theory in an attempt to isolate China. The purpose of the U.S.-Japan security pact, [in Beijing's eyes], is to stop China from reaching out to the Pacific Ocean and to stop China from handling the Taiwan issue. .

"A giant gap exists between the United States and China in terms of their values and strategic interests. The Chinese Communist Party is a superpower rising suddenly, and China is a totalitarian country currently undergoing transition. It is not essentially necessary to find a common language for the first-ever dialogue [between the United States and China]. This dialogue is just meant to be the beginning of increased mutual understanding, and there is a long way ahead for both sides to walk on."

C) "`Loud Thunder Overriding Firecrackers': a Macroscopic Way of Thinking for Cross-Strait Policy"

The pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 500,000] editorialized (8/5):

". First, the policy goals [of the Taiwan government] should be elevated to the level of the `three direct links.' For example, the transitional period for weekend chartered flights should not be too long. The goal should be moving toward `regular flights' as soon as possible. Also, the idea for Penghu to be a transfer point is nothing but a `partial' viewpoint. If the three direct links will be implemented sooner or later, then there is no need to waste Penghu's time. Furthermore, one has learned from Kinmen and Matsu's `mini three links' that, with its economic and social conditions, Penghu's opening as a transfer point may not be beneficial to the country as a whole. Instead, this will quickly increase Penghu's dependence on the mainland, just as what has happened to Kinmen and Matsu. This definitely cannot be considered a good strategy. As a result, we should give up the `maintaining partial and harming the whole' way of thinking and adopt the `stabilizing the whole to save the partial' strategy.

"The so-called `stabilizing the whole to save the partial' strategy is to implement the `three direct links' as soon as possible and try our best to pursue the goal of developing Taiwan into an `Asian-Pacific platform.' Only then can we build a so-called `cross-Strait peaceful and stable interactive development framework.' Regarding the political dimensions, we should realize that there is no possibility for `name rectification and a new constitution' or `de jure Taiwan independence.' Taiwan should play the role of `a beacon for democracy and freedom' and maintain a relationship of mutual encouragement and mutual appreciation with the 1.3 billion people on the mainland. It is really not appropriate for those in charge of political affairs to face the 1.3 billion

mainlanders as 'Taiwan independence activists.' This will only intensify cross-Strait hatred. Only by doing this can cross-Strait economic and political interactions gradually bring about mutually beneficial results. Taiwan can thereby avoid the predication of continual marginalization of its economy and the increasing political hostility toward the other side across the Strait. ."

D) "Geopolitical Antagonisms Snarl Cross-Strait Issue"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] wrote in an editorial (8/5):

"The dynamics of recent geopolitical changes among the Asia-Pacific region's four big powers - China, Japan, Russia and the United States - are likely to complicate the already volatile relations across the Taiwan Strait, raising the potential of this island as a major flash-point in this part of the world. .

"For all his [i.e. President Chen Shui-bian] independence rhetoric, however, the fate of Taiwan will not be determined by Chen. Rather, it is in the hands of Beijing and Washington. Beijing does not really want to use force to solve the Taiwan issue and Washington fully recognizes that. This Chinese position is obvious: It must maintain a stable environment, both domestically and externally, so as to continue to pursue economic growth and other reforms. Surely, the U.S. does not want to go to war with China over Taiwan either. But increasingly, Washington's Taiwan policy goes beyond its original legal obligation to help defend this island. Beyond that commitment, the U.S. government, as with Tokyo, wants to get Taiwan to their side to counter China's rise as the superpower in the region, eclipsing their longstanding dominant position.

"As such, Taipei's pro-independence government now is not the only factor that poses a potential threat to the peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. The issue of cross-strait security is now complicated by the rise of new geopolitical antagonisms between the existing U.S.-Japan alliance and an emerging political coalition of China and Russia."

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